

Central Intelligence Agency



Washington, D.C. 20505

21 SEP 1982

82-1631/9

mr

OEXA 82-1813/F

Honorable Warren J. Mitchell
House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Mr. Mitchell:

This will acknowledge receipt of your letter of 2 September 1982 and the enclosure dated 30 June 1982 from Mr. William P. Ford. Mr. Ford asked that you request the Central Intelligence Agency, inter alia, to cooperate with the families' requests for documents relating to the deaths, and investigations thereof, of the four churchwomen slain in El Salvador in December 1980.

The Central Intelligence Agency has already responded to a number of similar inquiries from Members of the Congress. Please let me also assure you that this Agency has not denied documents to the families of the deceased women, even though the families have not communicated directly with the CIA. On 15 July 1982, the Agency responded to Mr. Michael Posner, Executive Director, The Lawyers' Committee for International Human Rights, who had filed a Freedom of Information Act request for information on this subject. Mr. Posner stated to us that he was acting on behalf of the families of the four women, hence, our correspondence was directed to him. In the Agency's final response to Mr. Posner, he was given all Agency-originated documents in sanitized form to protect sources and methods, plus all open-source material. In addition, Mr. Posner was advised that other documents located in our files that originated with other Government agencies were referred to those agencies for direct response to Mr. Posner.

May I ask that you explain to Mr. Ford that the CIA does not now have and has never had any investigative authority except as it relates to our own employees. We do not report on the activities of American citizens anywhere, except as authorized by Presidential Executive Order 12333 and related procedures.

That is not to say that we do not cooperate with other Federal agencies when and as requested. Our people would most certainly be alert to any information surfaced that related to a crime such as the

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murder of American citizens abroad and would pass that information to the agency having jurisdiction and responsibility. That was certainly the case in this particular situation.

I hope the above will help to explain this matter as it relates to this Agency, and that it will reassure you and the families of the deceased women that we are effectively carrying out our duties and responsibilities.

Sincerely,

/s/ John N. McMahon

John N. McMahon

Acting Director of Central Intelligence

cc: Honorable Edward P. Boland, Chairman
House Permanent Select Committee on
Intelligence

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LLD [redacted] 15 September 1982)

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